

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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To Whom it May Concern

On page 14, first column, of this issue, under Publishers' Announcement, the reader will find something of special interest to him. The announcement referred to may not *concern* every reader of the EVANGELIST; we know it does not, and yet it may be of *interest* to every reader of the paper. If you have not yet renewed your subscription, please do not fail to read the announcement. Attention is called to the matter in this column so that those concerned will not overlook it. It is something of too much importance to be passed by. Let it have the immediate attention of every one, who, after reading it, finds that it means him. If you have renewed your paper, make it your business to see that your neighbor does the same. *Turn to page 14, please.*

Choosing a Pastor

Candidating and trial sermonizing is a discreditable and pernicious practice in many of the larger churches, which we hope will not become a fixed policy in ours. A writer on this subject very justly and forcibly says that "a shallow man, confident and magnetic, may please you at first hearing, while a worthy man, from humility or physical trepidation, may disappoint you. You must hear a man preach for a year before you have a right to judge him. Good preachers are better in their twentieth sermon than in their first. Candidating does not tell you enough. Manhood is the supreme qualification. You can not judge of manhood in one sermon."

This is good sound sense, but at the same time it doesn't cover the whole ground. A church can not afford to make a mistake in calling a pastor. Neither can a pastor afford to make a mistake in getting a church. There is as much difference and as much need for discreet selection in one as in the other. Call churches are frequently confronted with one of two serious problems: how to get rid of an undesirable pastor, and how to find a good one. If the preacher doesn't like the charge, he can resign. A dissatisfied church may be just as willing to resign its pastor, but if the pastor isn't willing, there comes the hitch. Of

course such secondary considerations should not be allowed to interfere with the prosperity of the church, but the poor fellow may have a family to support, and it is hard to give up one's living without having another in sight. Upon the whole it is a difficult problem, and ecclesiastical experience has found out but one expedient which furnishes anything like a satisfactory solution. That experience is the intermediary between the pastor and the church.

Methodism provides for an arbitrary intermediary—the conference and the bishops—who says "to one man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh." But no arbitrary and centralized system can be adopted by a congregational church without a radical change in its policy. Might not the true solution be found in an advisory intermediary? Suppose, for instance, an Advisory Board should be constituted in each conference district, with its duties clearly defined, to whom an unsettled pastor could say: Find me a church; or to whom an unsupplied church could say; Find us a suitable pastor. Add to this a reasonable time limit, not an arbitrary one of course, but a kind of general consent arrangement, and much of the friction and inefficiency of the haphazard system would be obviated. The Advisory Board would be a sort of information bureau, and information is what is needed on both sides, more than anything else. If the board should attend to its duties, and become active and efficient, in a short time there would be neither idle preachers nor pastorless churches. Weak churches could be conveniently grouped and supplied. This board finding within the bounds of its jurisdiction a dissatisfied church or a dissatisfied pastor, could study the situation, find another call for the preacher, suggest another pastor for the church, advise both parties, and avoid all the friction and unpleasantness which often occurs where there is no wise third party to help out the difficulty. We make these suggestions in the line of possible improvement and reform. Harmony and efficiency are essential to the success of the church, and we ought not be satisfied with anything short of the *highest* efficiency. Undoubtedly some form of superintendency marked the policy of the primitive church, and we profess to make the primitive church our ideal.